



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Human Dimension Seminar on Migration and Integration**

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes  
To the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 19, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the Chair for the choice of the topic of "Migration and Integration" for what was a very successful and informative Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw last week. Due thanks also go to ODIHR for doing such an excellent job of organizing the conference.

Over the past several years I have repeated many times, in many different fora, the conviction that migration and integration are perhaps the most important issues facing OSCE participating States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And this, with due regard for our Russian colleagues, is something that indeed is a problem East and West of Vienna.

That is why I was frankly very disappointed and saddened that more OSCE Ambassadors could not be present in Warsaw to listen and learn from the discussions on this critically important topic. Besides myself, I only saw two Ambassadors from Vienna – perhaps I missed one, but it was a very thin turnout. I thus hope that others will take the opportunity to read the circulated statements and to report back to their Foreign Ministries the wealth of recommendations that came out of the seminar.

I am very glad and proud that OSCE has taken a very crucial first step this year, under the Slovenian Chairmanship, towards helping participating States recognize and meet the immense challenges of migration, and especially integration of legal immigrants into public life and into their host societies.

Having myself immigrated to the U.S. many, many years ago, I was particularly interested in the theme of this year's Human Dimension Seminar. Having worked as the U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE for the past three and a half years, I also recognize how timely and important this topic is for the entire OSCE region.

New flows of migrants mean that states may face increased ethnic, racial, and religious diversity, in some cases for the very first time in their history, and on a large scale.

Immigration can be seen – used to be seen - as a great opportunity, but too often it is seen as a great problem. Only a concerted effort by all interested parties – governments, international organizations, civil society, and migrants themselves – will ensure that international migration is beneficial to all: to the countries of origin, to the countries of destination, to the migrants themselves, and to the people they come into contact with.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, once again, commendations to you for choosing migration and integration as the subject of this year's Human Dimension Seminar.

Turning to another matter which is closely related to migration and immigration, namely tolerance (which is a key component of a successful migration and integration policy), I am very pleased to share with you here that the United States has just today announced the U.S. Delegation to the Cordoba conference and the chairman of the U.S. Delegation, who is a very prominent governor, governor of a state that has lived successfully with the problems of migration, of tolerance, of integration as much as any in the United States – and that is Governor George Pataki, the governor of New York state, who will follow the line of people that we have had heading our delegations in this area which the United States considers to be one of the proud achievements of OSCE in the past year and sees as one of the most important topics for all of the participating States of OSCE.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.